

Office Action dated: 12/17/2003

Response dated: 03/16/2004

U.S. Serial No. 09/713,454

SP00-037

### Remarks

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration of the outstanding office action is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-27 and 48-52 remain in this application. Claims 1 and 24 have been amended. Claims 15-23 have been canceled. Claims 28-47 have been withdrawn as a result of an earlier restriction requirement. In view of the examiner's earlier restriction requirement, applicant retains the right to present claims 28-47 in a divisional application.

### **§ 103 Rejections**

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable for obviousness over U.S. Patent No. 5,253,035 (Fukuoka et al) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,871,559 (Bloom) or WO91/13837 (Nicholls).

Claim 1 requires that the automated test station be adapted to guide a first end of the optical fiber which is stored on a storage spool to a first testing device, and also requires an automated conveyor system adapted to transport the optical fiber storage spool to the test station.

Fukuoka discloses a system for automating the testing of a length of optical fiber. As the Examiner has indicated, Fukuoka does not disclose an automated conveyor system, nor does Fukuoka disclose testing a fiber while it is wound onto a storage spool. Furthermore, Fukuoka does not disclose conveying a spool via an automated conveyor system and then testing the fiber by an automated test station, as applicants claim 1 requires.

Bloom discloses a method for automating fabrication of fiber optic devices. Bloom does not disclose testing an optical fiber which is stored on a storage spool, nor does Bloom disclose conveying a storage spool to a test station via an automated conveyor system. According to the Examiner, "Fukuoka does not disclose an automated conveyor system. Bloom discloses a conveyor system 74 (Figure 2 or abstract)."

While it is true that Figure 2 of Bloom discloses an apparatus in which moveable gripping devices 72 which grip the optical fiber are moveable along a track 74, there is no description in Bloom of an automated conveyor system adapted to transport an optical fiber storage spool to the test station. Furthermore, there is no description in Bloom of guiding a first end of the optical fiber to a first testing device and performing a test on the optical fiber while it is stored on a storage spool.

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Nicholls discloses an automated optical fiber processing system in which a robot conducts a fiber end to various work stations while cutting, cleaning, stripping, and testing take place. Again, there is no description of an automated conveyor system adapted to transport the optical fiber storage spool to the test station.

Applicants disagree that the proposed combination of Fukuoka and either Bloom or Nicholls would result in applicants claimed invention. For one thing, applicants submit that one of skill in the art of making optical fiber who was seeking to improve methods of inspecting bare optical fiber would not be motivated to look to patents dealing with methods of automating fabrication of fiber optic devices (Bloom). Furthermore, even if assuming arguendo, one of skill in the art would be motivated to combine the references as suggested by the Patent Office, such a combination still would not result in applicants claimed invention, as there is no description in any of the references cited of an automated conveyor system adapted to transport an optical fiber storage spool to a test station.

With regard to claim 7, again none of the references, either alone or in combination, disclose an automated conveyor system adapted to transport the spool from the first station to the second station. Furthermore, none of the references, alone or in combination, disclose an apparatus which is adapted to automatically strip, cut, etc. both the first end and second end of the optical fiber and perform a test on the optical fiber while the fiber is retained on the spool.

With respect to claim 14, none of the references, alone or in combination, disclose first and second testing stations, wherein an automated conveyor system is adapted to transport the spool from the first test station to the second test station.

With respect to claim 24, none of the references, alone or in combination, disclose transporting an optical fiber storage spool which stores a length of optical fiber to a first station by an automated transportation system, and then acquiring a sampling of the optical fiber from the spool by a testing apparatus and then testing the length of the optical fiber.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 48-52 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable for obviousness over U.S. Patent No. 5,253,035 (Fukuoka et al) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,871,559 (Bloom) or WO91/13837 (Nicholls) and 5,394,606 (Kinoshita et al).

The Examiner admits that Fukuoka does not disclose testing a fiber wound onto the spool. The Examiner asserts that Kinoshita discloses testing a fiber wound onto the spool 19.

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Applicants respectfully disagree. Kinoshita discloses a method for testing optical fiber which is retained in an optical fiber cable. Applicants invention, on the other hand, is directed to testing optical fiber on a storage spool which stores optical fiber prior to being cabled. Furthermore, there is no mention or suggestion in any of the references cited of placing a spool onto a pallet such that both the first end and the second end of the optical fiber can be tested while the fiber is retained on the optical fiber storage spool.

### Conclusion

Based upon the above amendments, remarks, and papers of record, Applicant believes the pending claims of the above-captioned application are in allowable form and patentable over the prior art of record. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the pending claims 1-14, 24-27, and 48-52 and a prompt Notice of Allowance thereon.

Applicant believes that no extension of time is necessary to make this Response timely. Should Applicant be in error, Applicant respectfully requests that the Office grant such time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as necessary to make this Reply timely, and hereby authorizes the Office to charge any necessary fee or surcharge with respect to said time extension to the deposit account of the undersigned firm of attorneys, Deposit Account 03-3325.

Please direct any questions or comments to Robert L. Carlson at 607-974-3502.

Respectfully submitted,

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